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AUTHOR Backler, Alan

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ABSTRACT

This ERIC Trends Issues paper highlights the complementary qualities of geography and history and recommends the infusion of geography core themes into high school U.S. history courses. Part 1, "Rationale for Teaching Geography in American History," features information about: (1) overcoming the neglect of geography instruction; (2) finding a suitable place for geography teaching in high school curricula; and (3) the role and needs of geographic education. Part 2, "Guidelines for Selection of Content on Geography in American History," proposes that integration be based on the five geographic themes of location, place, relationships within places, movement, and regions in conjunction with the five historical literacy concepts of: (1) understanding time and chronology; (2) analyzing cause and effect relationships; (3) examining continuity and change; (4) recognizing and participating in a common memory; and (5) developing historical empathy. Cognitive skills that are needed for learning geography and history are also described. Part 3, "Ideas for Lessons on Geography in American History," presents and discusses examples of five U.S. history topics and explains how they can be linked to geographic themes, elements of historical literacy, and cognitive skills. Part 4 offers a summary and curriculum recommendations. A selected bibliography of 14 ERIC resource materials is included. (JHP)

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Teaching Geography in American History

by Alan Backler

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Social Studies Development Center
ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Backler is a nationally-known educator in geography. He earned the Ph.D. in geography from the University of Michigan. He has been at Indiana University since 1969, where he has been on the faculty of the geography department and a director of geography education projects at the Social Studies Development Center. Dr. Backler is a co-author of a high school textbook, *World Geography*, and a middle school textbook, *Global Geography*, which was developed with funding from the National Science Foundation. Dr. Backler currently is director of the Teaching Resources Center of the College of Arts and Science, Indiana University.

FOREWORD

In recent years, there has been a great revival of interest in the teaching and learning of geography in schools. Likewise, increased attention has been given during the 1980s to the teaching and learning of history. In this publication, Alan Backler has highlighted the complementary qualities of geography and history and has recommended the infusion of core themes of geography into high school courses in American history. Backler supports his recommendations with ideas about the design of lessons on how to blend main geographic themes with topics and events in American history.

Teachers and curriculum specialists will be intrigued by Backler's rationale for teaching geography in high school American history courses. And they will value his efforts to provide practical guidelines on how to do it.

Alan Backler is eminently qualified to undertake this work. He combines solid knowledge of academic content with high-level skills in curriculum development and pedagogy.

John J. Patrick
Director, ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/
Social Science Education and
Director, Social Studies Development Center
of Indiana University

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Before we present you the matters of fact, it is fit to offer to your view the stage whereon they were acted; for as Geography without History seemeth a carkasse without motion; so History without Geography, wandreth as a Vagrant without a certaine habitation.

Capt. John Smith,
The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles, 1624, 169.

I. Rationale for Teaching Geography in American History

Geography and history are "hot topics" on the curriculum reform agenda. Major organizations, educators, scholars, and the mass media claim that treatment of these two basic subjects in our schools has seriously weakened general education for citizenship.

The National Geographic Society has joined the Association of American Geographers, National Council for Geographic Education, and American Geographical Society to establish GENIP, the Geographic Education National Implementation Project, which is committed to renewal and improvement of elementary and secondary education in geography. The National Geographic Society has also established a Geography Education Program to stimulate enthusiasm, create materials, and bolster teacher training in geography. One program component involves the sponsorship of state-level alliances of university-level geographers, policy makers, and teachers.

In a similar fashion, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Educational Excellence Network, and the Education for Democracy Project of the American Federation of Teachers are calling for reform in the teaching and learning of history in the schools. The Organization of American Historians, American Historical Association, and National Council for the Social Studies have created the History Teaching Alliance, a national network of secondary school history teachers and university-based scholars, who are committed to improvement of history education in the schools.

Connecting Geography and History in the Curriculum

Specialists in education increasingly are calling for a combination of geography and history as a major item on the curriculum reform agenda. In concert, these two subjects provide learners with knowledge of place and time, of where and when human activities happened. Interrelationship of these two subjects provides a context for enlightened integration of various perspectives on human behavior in the past and present. Gilbert Sewall, co-director of the Educational Excellence Network, for instance, suggests that a first step in improving history textbooks would be to "reaffirm history and geography as the *primum mobile* of social studies."[1]

Former Secretary of Education William Bennett in a recent report on elementary education took a similar stand. He proposed that the social studies "as presently constituted be transformed. It should teach the knowledge and skills needed for life in a democratic society through the interrelated disciplines of history, geography, and civics."[2] The American Federation of Teachers, in setting out principles for reforming American education so as to place greater emphasis on democratic values, argued for a return of history, geography, and the humanities to the center of the curriculum.[3]

In 1984, the Task Force on Scope and Sequence of the National Council for the Social Studies presented recommendations about curriculum reform. In response to the NCSS Task Force, Matthew Downey developed a scheme that places history and geography at the center of the social studies curriculum. Downey, a historian, argues that history is the one discipline most capable of synthesizing the variety of human experience. "Its chronological organization provides a suitable framework for integrating much of the subject matter of the social studies. . . . No less important is geography, which is concerned about the spatial context in which historical developments take place. As history helps students acquire a sense of historical time, geography gives them an understanding of the importance of place. Time and space are the fundamental dimensions in which human cultures evolve and human beings interact."[4] In a similar way, Christopher Salter, a geographer, argues that geography and history are part and parcel of the same reality.

> There is no such thing as an "aspatial event." If something occurred, it occurred in space. If it occurred in space, it is an event wrapped with the qualities, the elements, and the influences of the environment. That is why there is no history without geography. All events, as has been said so many times, occur at the intersection of space and time.[5]

The new curriculum framework of the California State Department of Education also highlights geography and history as the most basic subjects of the social studies curriculum. The California Framework "is centered in the chronological study of history. History, placed in its geographic setting, establishes human activities in time and place. History and geography are the two great integrative studies of the field. In examining the past and present, students should recognize that events and changes occur in a specific time and place, that historical change has both causes and effects, and that life is bounded by the constraints of place. Throughout this curriculum, the importance of the variables of time and place, when and where, history and geography, is stressed repeatedly."[6]

Interrelationships of Content in Geography and History

In a book dealing with a recent national assessment of students' knowledge of history, Diane Ravitch and Chester Finn argue that "the study of history at every grade level should incorporate the study of geography." They believe that "geographic literacy enables students to understand how people and places influence each other."[7]

Ravitch and Finn go on to identify some ways in which knowledge of geography can be used to understand historical events and developments. They note: "Past events occurred in particular places, and characteristics of the places often influenced human behavior. Students need to understand how the presence of isolating geographic factors, like a mountain range or a desert, affect cultural development, and how physical char-

acteristics of the land affect immigration patterns, trade routes, invasions, wars, and economic development."[8]

The eminent geographer Donald Meinig also views geography and history as complementary, "bound together by the very nature of things." This relationship, he states, "is implied by such common terms as space and time, area and era, places and events, pairs that are fundamentally inseparable." However, he warns that it is important to realize that "geography is not just a physical stage for the historical drama, not just a set of facts about areas of the earth. It is a special way of looking at the world. Geography, like history, is an age-old and essential strategy for thinking about large and complex matters."[9]

Meinig's use of the terms "people" and "place" in a study of the Great Columbia Plain illustrates what he means by a "special way of looking at the world":

> . . . people are obviously an important part of most places, but the focus here is not upon them directly but upon how they have affected or given character to places. Many persons famous in regional history appear in this study, but they are not here primarily as personalities who were important as traders, missionaries, soldiers, or politicians but as ecologists and strategists who in an important way judged or tested, selected sites or established routes upon the land.[10]

Overcoming Neglect of Geography in the Curriculum: A Time for Action

The time is ripe for the development of instructional materials dealing with geography and history as interrelated fundamentals of the curriculum. Professional organizations are committed to reform in the teaching and learning of both subjects. Educational specialists are calling for the reaffirmation of history and geography as the core of social studies. Scholars have articulated the nature of the relationship between geography and history. Yet many geographers would oppose efforts to develop such materials. They believe that the only way to reserve a place for geography in the curriculum is to offer geography as a separate subject.[11] This sentiment was recently expressed by Salvatore Natoli and Charles Gritzner, writing in a 1988 NCSS Bulletin, *Strengthening Geography in the Social Studies*. They contend that "although other social sciences, physical sciences, and the humanities ostensibly deal with geographical content, they tend to ignore important spatial aspects of issues and problems. By emphasizing the geographical point of view in addressing these problems, separate and distinctive geography courses reduce the chances of ignoring or mistreating these important concepts."[12]

Geographers can point to studies that examine how geography is currently handled in American history textbooks to support their claims about the status of geography in the curriculum. In 1987, Joseph Stoltman conducted a survey of the widely-used middle school and high school textbooks in American history. The specific objective of the study was "to determine if the textbooks presented geographic facts, ideas, processes and

skills important to the comprehension and understanding of historical content." Stoltman concluded that most of the textbooks (80 percent) contained a marginal to unacceptable treatment of the relationship between history and geography. He said, "Basic skills in map and graph reading, and the intellectual processes. . . which entail geographic considerations were reduced to a minimal level or left out entirely."[13]

The consequence of this type of treatment is geographic illiteracy. It is understandable therefore that Ravitch and Finn could not discern "much evidence that the state of geographic knowledge is strong or secure."[14] This conclusion was based on a 1986 national assessment of high school students' knowledge of history. They found that students' knowledge of geography in history was unsatisfactory and concluded: "Students did best when all that was asked was simple place identification—but worst when they were expected to integrate their knowledge of geography with their knowledge of history."[15]

The development of separate and distinct geography courses way be one way to reduce the chances that geography will be ignored or mistreated in the curriculum. Another approach, the one advocated in this paper, is to systematically incorporate the geographic point of view into the study of a dominant course or courses in social studies. This approach is recommended because it makes sense in light of national curriculum patterns, and because recent developments in geographic education make it possible.

Finding a Place for Geography in the High School Curriculum

In 1980, Project SPAN (Social Studies/Social Science Education: Priorities, Practices, and Needs) reported on the present and future status of the social studies in the United States. The report was produced by the Social Science Education Consortium and sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

Project SPAN noted a strong similarity in "courses and topics taught at grade levels from K-12 across the country." The pattern suggested the existence of a "virtual nation-wide curriculum which is held rather firmly in place by state laws, district requirement offerings, and tradition."[16] The typical pattern is shown in the table below

Dominant Social Studies Curriculum
Organization Pattern

K - Self, School, Community, Home
1 - Families
2 - Neighborhood
3 - Communities
4 - State History, Geographic Regions
5 - U.S. History
6 - World Cultures
7 - World Geography or History
8 - American History
9 - World History/civics
10 - World History
11 - American History
12 - American Government

The pattern can be described as a seven-year "expanding environments" sequence (K-6) followed by two cycles of "contracting environments" (7-9 and 10-12). This pattern has existed for several decades and continues unchanged into the late 1980s. The above list indicates that the scope and sequence is dominated by history. Geography is widely taught only at the seventh-grade level. Given this pattern, a promising way to assure inclusion of geography in the high school curriculum is to incorporate it into the study of history, especially American history. The Bradley Commission on History in the Schools determined that U.S. History is required for high school graduation in all but four states.[17] Geography, on the other hand, is required for high school graduation in only about four states.

Ideas of Geographic Educators About Curriculum Improvement

Geographers have traced the evolution of their discipline in the curriculum in the United States.[18] They indicate that in the 18th and 19th centuries, schools showed a profound interest in teaching geography. In the past fifty years, however, there has been a definite decline in the status of geography in the schools. Several explanations have been offered, but one seems to be basic. Barbara Winston, writing in a 1986 NCSS Bulletin, argued that geography has suffered a diminished role in the social studies for one main reason: there was "a basic confusion about the nature and purpose of geography in the schools. Geography has been widely viewed as a fact-centered, overloaded collection of trivia to be memorized."[19] This confusion has been addressed by the *Guidelines for Geographic Education*,[20] published in 1984 by the Association of American Geographers and the National Council for Geographic Education. The publication is a comprehensive statement by professional geographers and geographic educators on the content, concepts, and placement of geography in the curriculum. It is an attempt to

- articulate the importance of geography as a school subject;
- identify the fundamental themes that form the basis for school geography;
- determine where and how the themes should be presented in the curriculum;
- elaborate upon the concepts and skills that complement the themes;
- enhance the role of geography in preparing students as citizens of local, regional, national, and global societies; and
- suggest several approaches to geography, including regional, systematic, and problems-oriented study.

The guidelines provide a clear statement of the perspectives, information, concepts, and skills of geography. They can be used to systematically incorporate the geographic point of view into the study of American history, the dominant subject of the social studies.

II. Guidelines for Selection of Content on Geography in American History

How should curriculum developers and teachers proceed to connect geography with American history in the curriculum? They might begin with five *geographic themes* presented in *Guidelines for Geographic Education:* location, place, human/environmental interactions, movement, regions. These themes can be used to illuminate and enhance understanding of significant topics that are highlighted in standard American history courses.[21] Teachers and curriculum developers also need to connect these geographic themes with elements of historical literacy and cognitive skills in the study of geography and history. These three categories of guidelines are discussed below: five geographic themes, elements of historical literacy, and cognitive skills in the study of geography and history.

Five Geographic Themes

There seems to be a consensus emerging in geography education circles around five main themes: location, place, human/environmental interactions, movement, and regions. The National Council for Geographic Education, the Association of American Geographers, and the National Geographic Society, have endorsed these five themes. Increasingly, they are being adopted by developers of curriculum guides for state-level departments of education and local school districts. For example, these five themes are emphasized in the influential *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools.*[22] What do these five geographic themes mean in terms of the school curriculum?

Location: Position on the Earth's Surface. Absolute and relative location are two ways of describing the position of places on the earth's surface. In many instances, it is important to identify absolute locations as precise points on the earth. For instance, determining the precise position of fresh water supplies is critical to filling a region's fresh water needs. The coordinates of latitude and longitude are widely accepted and useful ways of portraying exact locations. Determining relative location—the position of one place with respect to other important places—is equally significant. If, for example, the position of fresh water supplies with respect to potential water users is too remote, then it will not be feasible to exploit these supplies.

Place: Natural and Cultural Characteristics. All places on earth have distinct natural and cultural characteristics that distinguish them from other places. The natural characteristics derive from geological, hydrological, atmospheric, and biological processes that produce land forms, water bodies, climate, soils, natural vegetation, and animal life. Human ideas and actions also shape the character of places, which vary in population, composition, settlement patterns, architecture, kinds of economic and recreational activities, and transportation and communication networks. One

place may also differ from another in the ideologies and philosophical or religious tenets of people who live there, by their languages, and by their forms of economic, social, and political organization. Taken together, the natural and human characteristics of places provide keys to identifying and interpreting simple and complex interrelations between people and their environments.

Relationships Within Places: Humans and Environments. All places on the earth have advantages and disadvantages for human settlement. High population densities have developed on flood plains, for example, where people could take advantage of level ground, fertile soils, water resources, and opportunities for river transportation. By contrast population densities are usually low in deserts. Yet flood plains are periodically subjected to severe damage, and some desert areas have been modified to support large population concentrations. People modify and adapt to natural settings in ways that reveal cultural values, economic and political circumstances, and technological abilities. It is important to understand how such human-environment relationships develop and what the consequences are for people and for the environment. This understanding fosters appreciation of one's natural environment and cultural heritage.

Movement: Humans Interacting on the Earth. Human beings are unevenly distributed across the face of the earth. Some live on farms or in the country; others live in towns, villages, or cities. Yet these people interact with each other; they travel from one place to another; communicate with each other; or rely upon products, information, or ideas that come from beyond their immediate environments. The most visible evidence of the interaction of places are the transportation and communication lines that link different parts of a large country, such as the United States, and interconnect virtually every part of the world. Most people interact with other places almost every day of their lives. Interaction continues to change as transportation and communication technologies change. By anticipating these changes and examining their geographical and social consequences, individuals are more likely to understand and deal effectively with their surroundings.

Regions: How They Form and Change. The basic unit of geographic study, the region, is any area that displays unity in terms of selected criteria. Regions show the extent of political power, such as nations, provinces, countries, or cities. Yet there are almost countless ways to define meaningful regions, depending on the issues and problems being considered. Some regions are defined by a single characteristic, such as their governmental unit, language group, or type of landforms; others by the interplay of many complex features. The idea of regions is used as a tool to examine, define, describe, explain, and analyze the human and natural environments. Thus, regions are convenient and manageable units upon which to build one's knowledge of the world. They provide a context for studying

events in the past and present, and they can be used as an intermediate step between one's knowledge of localities and the entire planet.

Historical Literacy

Five ideas about historical literacy can be used in combination with the five geographic themes to guide selection of content and design of lessons on geography in American history. The five ideas are essential to historical understanding and ability to use history to think effectively about the world in the past and present. These ideas are (1) time and chronology, (2) cause/effect relationships, (3) continuity and change, (4) common memory, and (5) historical empathy. These five ideas are emphasized in the new *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.[23]

Understand Time and Chronology. History is a discipline based on units of time—year, decade, century—in which events occur from the past through the present in seemingly irreversible succession. Chronology is the arrangement of events in time, which enables one to make relationships between events—a key to coherent examination of what humans have done in the past. To think in historical terms, one must be able to define units of time and place and to think about relationships of events within and across different units of time and place.

Analyze Cause/Effect Relationships. Historical understanding involves examination of conditions and consequences—the circumstances associated with why things happened and the outcomes related to those circumstances. Historical literacy involves interpretation of multiple causes and effects, the distinction between correlation and causation, and appreciation of the speculative or tentative nature of cause/effect analysis.

Examine Continuity and Change. History involves the study of why people and their societies change or stay essentially the same. Examination of continuity and change requires "before and after" comparisons of various aspects of human societies and the search for reasons to explain social change or lack of change. The effective use of history to interpret and explain social reality in the past and present is contingent upon one's ability to chart and explain trends in history that represent significant continuities and changes.

Recognize and Participate in a Common Memory. The study of history should foster recognition of a shared cultural heritage and the social value of literacy in this culture. A common memory, based on knowledge of the history of one's society or nation, is a means of social cohesion and continuity. This common historical knowledge enables different individuals in a society to have a common civic identity through participation in a common culture. Recognition and participation in a society's common memory involves acquisition of shared knowledge and attitudes about symbols, events, persons, and places which constitute basic aspects of cultural literacy.

Develop Historical Empathy. Historical study involves creative reconstruction of past societies. It also involves recreation of the life and thoughts

of particular persons of other times and places. These creative reconstructions of societies and individuals are likely to develop empathy for people of the past, an ability to sense how individuals felt about the events and challenges of their era. Historical understanding requires development of empathy, which is dependent upon exposure to dramatic episodes about individuals responding to typical human problems and issues.

Cognitive Skills in Geography and History

If students are to become adept learners and thinkers about geography in American history, they need to develop and practice particular cognitive skills, such as asking questions, acquiring information, organizing and presenting information, interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses about particularities and generalities, making comparisons, and making evaluations.

Asking Questions. Geography and history are distinguished by the kinds of questions that direct inquiries in these disciplines. Geographers, for example, ask "where?" and "why there?" And historians ask "when?" and "why then?" Students of geography and history deal with questions about description, explanation, comparison, and evaluation of social phenomena in the past and present. They pose questions about how information and ideas are related.

Acquiring Information. These skills in geography range from identifying locations using grid systems through making observations and gathering information in the field and obtaining statistical data. In history, skills of acquiring information involve identification of relevant information in primary sources, such as government documents, newspaper articles, private letters and diaries, etc. The student of history and geography also gathers information from examination of artifacts and from witnesses or participants in events that are the object of his or her inquiries.

Organizing and Presenting Information. Students of geography and history organize information to derive and convey meaning about an object of inquiry. Classification, for example, is a prerequisite to cogent description of events or developments in history. And students of history and geography prepare maps, tables, diagrams, graphs, and essays to organize data from which to present coherent written and oral descriptions and explanations.

Interpreting Information. The study of geography and history involves interpretation of what a map, table, graph, diagram, or document says. A skilled interpreter can explain main ideas and "read between the lines" to elucidate written and graphic messages.

Formulating and Testing Hypotheses about Particularities and Generalities. These skills involve inferences based on evidence in maps, tables, graphs, diagrams, documents, and other sources of information. Students of geography and history continually construct descriptive and explanatory statements from incomplete information and then seek more information

against which to test these hypotheses—to support or reject them. Students of history often formulate and test hypotheses about particularities—specific events or actions. History and geography also involve formulation and testing of hypotheses about generalities, statements of broad applicability that are based on inferences from particularities.

Making Comparisons. Hypotheses in history and geography often involve comparisons, examination of similarities and differences of comparable phenomena. In history and geography, for example, investigations of continuity and change depend upon comparisons of conditions of a place at earlier and later periods. Comparisons are also made of comparable phenomena in different places, such as the similarities and differences in development of two cities.

Making Evaluations. Students of history and geography make reasoned judgments of good or bad, better or worse, which are based on defensible criteria. Skills in evaluation involve reflection and judgments about the value of actions and ideas of individuals and their societies in the past and present. Through evaluative activities, students may develop reasoned commitment to shared values of their civilization.

III. Ideas for Lessons on Geography in American History

The preceding guidelines can be used to generate ideas for lessons on geography in American history. For example, here are five important topics in American history that can be linked to the geographic themes, elements of historical literacy, and cognitive skills that are discussed in the preceding section of this paper.

1. North versus South in the Founding of the United States, 1783-1800 (geographic theme: regions).
2. Jefferson's Decision to Purchase Louisiana, 1801-1815 (geographic theme: location).
3. Effects of the Civil War on the Culture of the South, 1860-1877 (geographic theme: place).
4. Coming to America from Southern and Eastern Europe, 1877-1920 (geographic theme: movement).
5. A New Deal for the Dust Bowl, 1930-1945 (geographic theme: human/environment interactions).

North Versus South in the Founding of the United States, 1783-1800

In 1783, the United States received recognition, in the Treaty of Paris, of its self-proclaimed status as an independent nation. However, the success or failure of the new nation would turn on the ability of Americans to cope with several critical challenges and problems, which were influenced significantly by geography. Among these problems were differences between the northern and southern regions of the new nation. The problem of regional differences was rooted in the fact that the new American nation was, in the words of D.W. Meinig, "At once a nation and federation, a union of people and a union of states."[24]

The geographic theme of *regions* can be applied to teaching and learning about differences and compromises between leaders of northern and southern states during the Constitutional Convention and the establishment of constitutional government from 1789 to 1800. The most significant difference between northern and southern states was the large population of black slaves in the south and the virtual absence of this "peculiar institution" in the north during the founding period. The new federal union of the American states was half free and half slave and this difference seriously complicated national development and preservation of the federal union.

Students could be prompted to use the geographic theme of regions to respond to these questions: (1) How did differences in the southern and northern regions of the United States complicate nation-building during the founding period? (2) How did southern and northern leaders attempt to resolve these differences through compromises? (3) What was the potential of these compromises for long-term resolution of fundamental differences between these two regions of the United States?

Students can be required to gather information about various regional differences during the founding period of the United States and to learn about the regional perspective that pervaded American politics of that time. Meinig reports, for example, that "it was routine [for the Founders] to think in geographical terms. . . From the very first meeting of the Continental Congress of 1774, the roll call of colonies/states was geographical, from north to south . . . which every one understood as referring to important differences in 'staple productions,' 'religion,' 'manners,' and 'other circumstances' (to use Madison's terms); indeed regional stereotypes abounded."[25]

In teaching and learning about these regional differences, during the founding period, students necessarily will practice cognitive skills in history and geography, such as acquiring and interpreting information, presenting information and ideas cogently in graphic and prose formats, and comparing social and political categories that shed light on similarities and differences between the northern and southern regions of the fledgling American nation during the founding period. And students will also be involved with essential elements of historical literacy, such as the development of a sense of time and chronology through intensive study of an important topic within one major period of American history and analysis of cause and effect relationships that are associated with the theme of regional differences. In particular, students might study north/south compromises at the Constitutional Convention, such as the "3/5 compromise" over representation in Congress and taxation and the compromise about abolition of the importation of slaves after 1808. Furthermore, the theme of regions will shed light on the north/south compromise that established an area of the Potomac river as the designated site of the new national capital. The preceding discussion offers only a few examples among many other possibilities of how to apply the geographic theme of regions to content in American history on the founding of the United States, 1783-1800.

Jefferson's Decision to Purchase Louisiana, 1801-1815

Another striking example of the application of geography to teaching and learning of American history is the Louisiana Purchase. President Thomas Jefferson faced an intriguing decision in the summer of 1803. Napoleon, the Emperor of France, had offered to sell Louisiana to the United States, for $15 million. This vast territory extended westward from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and southward from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico and the Spanish territories of Texas and New Mexico.

The opportunity to buy Louisiana seemed the fulfillment of the long-held American dream—control of territory on both sides of the mouth of the Mississippi River at the port of New Orleans. This event in history is also a grand opportunity to apply the geographic theme of location to the study of Jefferson's decision to purchase Louisiana from the French. Students should be asked to respond to this question: What was the impor-

tance of the location of territory at the mouth of the Mississippi River to the economic and political development of the United States at the beginning of the ninteenth century? In responding to this question, students will learn about the threat to the national security of the United States that was posed by foreign control of the port of New Orleans and the surrounding territory, whether by the Spanish (from 1783 to 1802 or by the French in 1803).

Students can be asked to acquire information about the importance of the location of New Orleans in 1803 by examining documents that reveal reasons why Jefferson decided to purchase Louisiana. For example, students might be asked to interpret statements of Jefferson to Robert Livingston, the American minister to France: "There is on this globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eights of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce and contain more than half our inhabitants. France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance."[26]

Through the analysis of documents and maps, students can develop understanding of the importance of the location of New Orleans to trading of goods between the western territories of the United States and the eastern seaboard of North America, the Caribbean Islands, and Western Europe. In addition, students will gain knowledge of the military and political importance of control of territory on both sides of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

By applying the geographic theme of location to the study of the Louisiana Purchase, students can have an opportunity to develop an essential element of historical literacy—historical empathy; they can try to put themselves in the place of President Jefferson as he faced the decision of whether or not to purchase Louisiana. Finally, students can analyze cause and effect relationships associated with the Louisiana Purchase. In this vein, they will connect several events to Jefferson's decision, such as the Lewis and Clark expedition, the military occupation of West Florida by American forces, the granting of statehood to Louisiana in 1812, and the battle of New Orleans at the end of the War of 1812.

Students might conclude a lesson on the Louisiana Purchase by evaluating Jefferson's decision of 1803 in light of the conditions surrounding the decision and the consequences stemming from it. Students might be asked to agree or disagree with the words of Robert Livingston, expressed after signing the treaty with France to purchase Louisiana: "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our lives."[27] In this concluding exercise, the geographic theme of location would provide a very important perspective on why Jefferson acted as he did.

Effects of the Civil War on the Culture of the South, 1860-1877

The Civil War was a vehicle of social and political change in the southern region of the United States, and is an example of how to apply the

geographic theme of place to American history. The Civil War was the great watershed experience of American history. Its causes were woven into the fabric of the American nation that emerged from the War of Independence, and its consequences were profound, amounting to a rebirth and eventual reconstruction of the United States. Various geographic themes can be applied to inquiries about the Civil War and its consequences. This example focuses on the geographic theme of place through a study of Savannah, Georgia. As a place, Savannah reflected the far-reaching changes in the Southern way of life that were brought about by the Civil War.

Students can be asked to apply the geographic theme of place to their study of these questions: (1) How were the natural and cultural characteristics of Savannah affected by the South's defeat in the Civil War? (2) To what extent was what happened in Savannah an indicator of changes in the Southern regional way of life as a consequence of the Civil War?

Teachers can confront students with excerpts from a notable three-volume collection of primary sources from one prominent Southern family, the Jones family of Savannah. This series, *The Children of Pride*, has been acclaimed by historians as a rich and dramatic collection of data and insights about the Civil War's consequences on people and places in the South.[28] The first volume in the series, *Many Mansions*, tells about the Jones family and its way of life before the Civil War. Volume 2, *The Edge of the Sword*, details the Jones' experiences during the Civil War, including the family's confrontation with Sherman's troops at the end of their infamous march through Georgia. The third volume, *The Night Season*, provides the Jones' account of the post-war period of Reconstruction. For purposes of balance, teachers will want to provide alternative views of the Civil War's consequences on the South that can be derived from letters and diaries and eyewitness accounts of slaves and former slaves, soldiers in the Union army, and northern civilians who moved south after the war to participate in the South's reconstruction.

Through studies based on these primary sources, students will develop cognitive skills in asking questions, interpreting and analyzing documents, formulating and testing hypotheses about events in history, and evaluating sources. Furthermore, they will have rich opportunities to examine continuity and change in a place, to recognize and participate in the common memory of the American people, and to develop historical empathy for people dealing with crisis and the over-powering forces of social change.

Coming to America From Eastern and Southern Europe, 1877-1920

The United States is a country of immigrants. Between 1820 and 1980, more than 50 million people immigrated to the United States. Immigration is a major topic considered in American history courses, especially as it related to the rise of modern America in the years 1877-1920.

Geography examines immigration (more generally, migration) within the context of the movement theme. Geographers distinguish two types

of migration: forced and voluntary. They differ in terms of who makes the decision to move.

Forced migration occurs when a person or group of people are made to move because of someone else's decisions. The movement of slaves to the United States from Africa is an example of forced migration.

The movement of Eastern and Southern Europeans to the United States from 1877-1920 is an example of voluntary migration. In this case, the migrants themselves typically made the decisions to leave one place and move to another. Voluntary migration results from a decision in which the potential migrant has compared living conditions in the place of origin and in possible destinations. If a destination is perceived to be significantly more attractive than the original place, migration will occur, but only if barriers to movement, such as costs and immigration laws, can be overcome.

Students can be asked to acquire information from written sources, dealing with voluntary migration. They could use the origins, destinations, barriers framework to report their findings. For example, they might be asked to examine the the following document, written in 1904, dealing with the Lithuanians coming to the United States.[29]

> At present, many come in order to escape military service, but the majority to avoid poverty in the Old Country. In the mind of an average inhabitant of Luthuania, America means a veritable Eldorado, in which everybody can be rich, if he is able to work hard; so everybody who thinks himself strong enough to do "hard work" dreams about free and rich America. The poorer classes sell their small estates; some even borrow money. Still others—and there are many of them— receive the tickets from their American friends and relatives. Many well-to-do peasants come, also, to the New World, some to earn money enough to pay off debts, to build a new house or to buy more land. These generally, when back in Lithuania, find conditions so unattractive that they come back to America, never to return to the Fatherland. At present, the number of Lithuanians in America probably has reached the 200,000 mark.

In this situation, the people involved in the move made the migration decision themselves. Because conditions in their homeland were not good, they decided to look for a better life elsewhere. America was often the place where they decided to move.

A New Deal for the Dust Bowl, 1930-1945

The New Deal is typically covered in American history courses, when the period 1932-1945 is considered. The New Deal had to cope with a major disaster in the Great Plains in 1934 and 1935, the "Dust Bowl." The causes of this disaster, the role played by modern science and technology and by the federal government under President Roosevelt's New Deal policies in helping farmers adjust to the situation, and the consequence of the Dust Bowl can all be understood within the context of relationships within places: the geographic theme of human/environment interactions.

Relationships within places pertains to the modification and adaptation by people of their natural environments in ways that reveal their cultural values, economic and political circumstances, and technological abilities. Geography focuses on understanding how such human-environment relationships develop and what their consequences are—for people and for the environment.

Most of the Great Plains has wet and dry periods that last from three to five years. The Dust Bowl area developed on the dry western margins of this large region. In this area there are wide variations in precipitation. It is not unusual for the area to receive 5 inches (12.5 centimeters) of precipitation for each of several years, 25 inches (60 centimeters) for several years, and 10 inches (25 centimeters) for several years after that. When the average annual precipitation is less than 20 inches (50 centimeters), such variations can have disastrous effects when people try to use the natural environment for farming and grazing of livestock.

Additionally, the Great Plains is frequently swept by strong, dry winds that blow eastward from the Rocky Mountains. Under natural conditions, the Great Plains was covered by tough grass that helped protect the soil from the wind and rain.

High wheat prices during and after World War I, together with widespread use of tractors, combines, and other farm machinery, led farmers to break new lands for wheat growing. Much of this newly-developed farmland was in the western Great Plains.

Most of the farmers who settled in the area were from the East. They were inexperienced in this kind of farming and did not understand the natural environment in the Great Plains. Their farming decisions were based on this limited knowledge.

The farming method most widely practiced on the Great Plains in the 1920s and 1930s is known as dry farming, which depended on the water naturally stored in the soil. In dry farming, a crop is planted in a particular field every second or third year. The field is left fallow in the other year or two. The moisture stored in the soil during the fallow period nurtures the next crop. To conserve the moisture in the soil, the land is frequently cultivated to rid it of weeds that would use the precious moisture.

In dry farming it is assumed that the water in the soil will be restored during the one- or two-year fallow period. This is a reasonable assumption when precipitation is normal. But when a long dry spell occurs, soil moisture is not restored. Storing enough moisture in the soil is vital for the next crop of wheat, since wheat requires more soil moisture than the original natural grasses that grew in the land.

Moreover, when wheat is harvested, the soils are left exposed to the wind. They are protected only by the stubble left from the harvest. Continuous weeding of the soil, part of the dry farming technique, adds to the problem. When soils are turned over in dry climates, they dry out quickly and get powdery, and are easily picked up by the wind.

Even grazing areas have major problem. Over-grazing by cattle, and especially by sheep and goats, strip the grass cover, exposing the soil to the wind and rain.

During the 1920s there was enough precipitation in the western Great Plains to restore moisture to the soils and protect them from the wind. But in the 1930s there was much less precipitation. The results were disastrous. Crops failed. Much of the top soil was carried away by winds. Dust storms swept the plains.

It was not unusual for dunes of topsoil and sand to form and completely cover fields, machines, and even buildings. In many places the original prairie grasses were replaced by desert vegetation. A vast Dust Bowl has formed on the western Great Plains. As a result, more than 500,000 people were forced to leave in search of work.

The federal government provided funds to farmers for new seed and livestock. The Department of Agriculture encouraged farmers to adapt new vegetation and soil conservation techniques. These human efforts, together with more favorable precipitation, led to a restoration of agriculture in the area by the 1950s.

Students could be encouraged to develop questions stimulated by the human/environment relationship theme that could be used to guide an investigation of the Dust Bowl era. They might ask: How do different groups of people evaluate and use natural environments to extract needed resources and grow crops? How are physical environments modified through the use of technology? What types of positive and negative consequences result from human modification of the environment?

Constructing questions like these and using them to guide an investigation of the Dust Bowl will help students realize that historical understanding involves an examination of conditions and consequences—the circumstances associated with why things happened and the outcomes related to those circumstances. They will also realize that most events require interpretation of multiple causes and effects. Historical events like the Dust Bowl, for example, cannot be understood by single causes, such as drought. In the same way, it is important to students to realize that while the Dust Bowl led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, it also resulted in the creation of larger, more efficient farms, better suited to the environmental conditions of the Great Plains.

IV. Summary and Recommendations

Geography and history are "hot topics" on the curriculum reform agenda. Specialists in education increasingly are calling for a combination of geography and history as a major item on this agenda. In concert these two subjects provide learners with knowledge of place and time, of where and when human activities happened. Interrelationship of these two subjects provides a context for enlightened integrations of various perspectives on human behavior in the past and present.

The geographer Donald Meinig agrees that geography and history are complementary, "bound together by the very nature of things." Yet he warns that it is important to realize that "geography is not just a physical stage for the historical drama, not just a set of facts about areas of the earth. It is a special way of looking at the world."

Many geographers feel that geography's "special way of looking at the world" has been ignored or mistreated in the social studies. They therefore believe that the only way to reserve a place for geography in the curriculum is to offer geography as a separate subject. An alternative approach, recommended in this paper, is to systematically incorporate the geographic point of view as it has been recently articulated into the study of American history, the dominant course in social studies.

How should curriculum developers and teachers connect geography with American history in the curriculum? They might begin with the *Guidelines for Geographic Education*, which provides a clear statement of the perspectives, information, concepts, and skills of geography. The five geographic themes included in the *Guidelines*—location, place, human/environmental interactions, movement, and regions—have been widely endorsed and adopted by geographers and curriculum guide developers. They can be used to illuminate and enhance understanding of significant topics and events, which are highlighted in American history courses.

Curriculum developers and teachers should also use five ideas about historical literacy in combination with the five geographic themes to guide the design of lessons on geography in American history. The five ideas—time and chronology, cause/effect relationships, continuity and change, common memory, and historical empathy—are essential to historical understanding and ability to use history to think effectively about the world in the past and present.

Finally, curriculum developers and teachers should attend to the cognitive skills needed by students if they are to become adept learners and thinkers about geography in American history. Students need opportunities to develop and practice particular cognitive skills, such as asking questions, acquiring information, organizing and presenting information, interpreting information, formulating and testing hypothesis, making comparisons, and making evaluations.

The task of connecting geography to American history will soon be made easier. The National Geographic Society is publishing a new atlas that focuses on U.S. history from a geographic perspective. It will be sent, at no cost, to 35,000 public, private, and parochial schools across the country. High school history teacher should take advantage of new materials and ideas of educators in geography. By blending geography with history, high school teachers will greatly enrich the core curriculum in social studies.

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